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THESIS REFLECTION

STORAGE OF IDEAS: THE MAAS LIBRARY
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1 Introduction

In the post-industrial city, storage becomes mobile and digitalized. The increasing digital storage flows, including knowledge and information, play a vital role in shaping the city's image. Triggered by this trend, the research is trying to investigate the influence brought by digital and dynamic storage on the development of building typologies. The research question is "How to translate the concept of storage of ideas into a collective building of knowledge and information?" The answers to the research question start from the investigation of the public library. The public library as the collective form of knowledge and information, traditionally devoted to storing ideas in the form of passive knowledge, is becoming the dynamic platform to produce pro-active knowledge creative activities. Storage of ideas become a way of communication that brings different background of people together. The important finding of the research is to conceptualize the Maas library as a modern panopticon. The spatial qualities of the modern panopticon (centrality and panoramic visibility) are analyzed from knowledge activities in contemporary libraries. The project's ambition is to take a step further than the contemporary precedents and test the potential of the Maas library as the pure modern panopticon.

South of Rotterdam as the testbed offers the challenges and opportunities for the project of storage of ideas. In consideration of the social context of Rotterdam south, the project is based on the assumption that a modern panopticon as the metaphor of the Maas library would provide a means of intervention to create an efficient knowledge platform within a complex residential community (Kop van Feijenoord). The design question is "How to use spatial qualities of the panopticon to design the knowledge creative activities of the Maas library?"

The Maas library is a 10,000 m2 building, located in the Feijenoordhaven, Kop van Feijenoord. The building program is distributed in two centres with different identities, which is composed of: 1 performative space (knowledge labs, makerspace, workshop), 2learning space, 3 inspiring space (exhibition), 4civic engagement space (sunken plaza& ground floor), 5rental office, 6excess storage (digital& physical).

2 Project Description

The project redefines the Maas library as the container of knowledge creative activities- are organized in a way of centrality. Centrality in the Maas library is conceived as the different interpretation of central space: centralized atrium, digital lab, creative idea platform, panorama exhibition platform, and auditorium for the creative class.

The first operation is to consolidate the library's proliferated activities. The principle of program organization is to develop from publicity (Ground floor) to professionalism (top floor). For example, the civic engagement space (ground floor), learning area& kids (first floor) are open to the public. On the upper floor, makerspace, working studio and rental office become more professional, which

are designed for the professional users.

Two plan principles are proposed to organize different programs. Firstly, inspiration activities are architecturally defined in the center. Through designing different types of activities in the centralized space, the manifesto of the Maas library, where knowledge creation activities are the main focus, will be strengthened. Secondly, Functional spaces are distributed in the surrounding. The Radioactive layout of the functional spaces follows the principle of centrality and strengthens the connection between inside and outside.

3 Relationship between research and design

Architectural design cannot make sense without the support of research. The looping mechanism exists between design and research. On one hand, during the process of research, it triggers a series of research questions that help architects position themselves in the contemporary social context. On the other hand, the research question enables architects re-investigate existing situations and deconstruct theories, leading to an appropriate answer in a specific social context. The studio topic "migration of ideas" provides the opportunity for us to explore the ideas flow in the contemporary cultural context and examine its influence on the Rotterdam. The inspiration for project topics comes from where I firstly encountered the industrial infrastructure in the site visit. Kop Van Zuid has gradually evolved into the digital age, from the port of Rotterdam with mono-function to a diverse multi-functional district. The remaining storage facilities which belong to the industrial age, for example, Fenix warehouse, have been given a new definition to adapt to the modern community. However, storage facilities, as products of the industrial past, are not only projects to be transformed, but also have the potential to develop the concept of storage and thus give back to the society. The process from investigation to reflection leads to my project ambition. In particular, a specific solution to the existing site condition and the core elements of the library. The design decision is not random because it reflects its position on the trend of migration of storage of ideas in the south of Rotterdam.

4 The Relationship between graduation topic and studio topic

The topic of Complex Projects 2020 fall is "migration of ideas", based on the context of Rotterdam. Hotel New York, as the precedence of migration culture in Rotterdam, triggers discussions and reflections of "migration of ideas" in worldwide. Our group" The Third Wave" echoes the studio topic by researching the development of different topics in the digitalization age (the third wave). In particular, Production, Bottom-Up activism, Digitalization, and Localism, etc. The project topic which I have chosen is to explore the migration of storage of ideas and translate it into the spatial form which is the Maas library. It thus responds to the studio topic "Migration of ideas" with the architectural spatial solution.

5 The relationship between the Research method chosen and the methodology of the graduation studio

The aim of the project research method is to understand the Rotterdam context and examine the migration of ideas in the urban environment. The guideline of the chosen research method is carried under the general research framework of the whole studio. With the specific focus (migration of ideas) and personal fascination, we as the group investigate the site situation together, collecting

hard data, developing the personal project topic. In the meantime, all individual projects work together in the urban context and thus contributing to the group strategy. The project methodology is the contextual approach that helps me position myself in the complex urban environment and imagine the future events of Rotterdam. The methods lead me to find the relationship between context and topics are mapping and collecting hard data. It contributes to linking the trend of the storage of ideas with the lack of cultural institutions in the south of Rotterdam. Another main research method is typological studies. The existing building typological studies, which incorporate both digital and physical forms of storage, contains several common design principles that lead to the spatial guidelines for the project design brief. However, the methodology I choose for this project is a bit specific in a way because it looks like an experimental design that tries to link with the modern panopticon. The quay of site also provides the opportunity for the project to define itself as the potential panopticon.

6 The relationship between graduation project and the wider social, professional and scientific relevance

The transformation of the mono-functional residential community has become a concern when Rotterdam city center is moving toward the south. Recently, the government has taken some measure to densify the Kop Van Feijenoord area and make it become a multi-functional area. However, the action of implantation of different functional buildings aggravates the gentrification of the district. To understand urban issues in a deeper way, the discussion of city complexity which Jane Jacobs distinguished are of great help. In the book of "The Death and Life of Great American Cities", Jane Jacobs believes the city problem is rooted in simplified complexity (Jacobs 2020). Bruno Latour also tried to comprehend city complexities and proposed two models of complexity: one is the Series of simple steps of small parts adding up, or, spatial complexity; the other is the simultaneous irruption of many variables, or, temporal complexity (Latour 2000). The aggregation of residential buildings in Kop Van Feijenoord is the first type. Can the Maas library create temporal complexity in the housing community?

Based on the understanding of the new complexity of community, the project is an experiment in testing the possibility that modern panopticon as the metaphor of the Maas library can promote community cohesion and thus create temporal complexity of community. The site condition provides opportunities for the project to create temporal complexity. The project site, as the in-between public space in Kop Van Feijenoord, has the potential to become the joints of events, behaviors, and interactions. The quay (open space) needs to have an organizational center bringing the residents together. Centrality becomes the key element in design the "modern panopticon" in the housing community. Besides, the urban connection with community need to be considered. The residential buildings on the north and south sides of the site should be the border of the "modern panopticon", not just limited by the site itself.

7 The Ethical Issues and Dilemmas

The ethical issue for the project is how to position the library in the urban context. Should it demonstrate the future identity to the greatest extent or to integrate with the urban environment on some level? The dilemma between introvert and extrovert comes from this ethical issue. Panopticon, traditionally designed for prisoners, is more or less introverted, centralized, and under surveillance. However, the project locates on the waterfront, leading to publicity and extrovert. How to define

publicity and water identity in the enclosed circular building volume? Should the ground floor open to the public totally or should it partly devote to the public? What kind of building gesture can bring civic engagement space from open plaza to the library? Through multiple design experiments of testing different spatial characteristics, the projects try to find a balanced answer to define its own identity in the general context, while integrating it into the neighborhood in a way.

On the other hand, the relationship with the proposed cable car station is also difficult to consider. The cable car station which brings people from Erasmus University and Erasmus medical center to the site promotes the accessibility of the project and even the entire waterfront. However, if the cable car station lands on the top floor of the building, it reverses the publicity of the building in the vertical direction. The final design decision is to find an intermediate position that would secure accessibility to some degree without compromising the project itself.

Bibliography

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